

December 12, 2012

News Release

For Immediate Release

Giraffe Calf in Guarded Condition; Warthog Euthanized

Zookeepers have diligently worked with the zoo's youngest calf, B.J., born on Nov. 23, to encourage him to nurse or drink from a bottle. This is the first calf for mother Emma, and initially she was anxious when the calf attempted to nurse. However, even though she has calmed down, the calf has not consistently nursed well.

To provide nutrition for the calf, zookeepers are tube-feeding him twice daily and offering grain and hay. However, the calf's weight fluctuates from day to day, and overall he is not gaining weight. Because the calf has not reliably nursed from his mother he has not built up a good immune system from the milk and therefore has weak immunity. He is receiving antibiotics as a precaution. At this time, the animal care staff considers the calf in very guarded condition.

Although Dickerson Park Zoo has seen considerable successes with breeding giraffes, over time the mortality rate for calves is approximately 25 percent.

Also, on Sunday, the staff veterinarian examined the zoo's aging warthog Elway after zookeepers reported respiratory issues. Preliminary findings from a necropsy (animal autopsy) point to congestive heart failure. The nearly 15-year-old warthog was humanely euthanized. Elway and his brother Terrell came to Dickerson Park Zoo in 1999 when they were 15 months old. Terrell died in early 2011. The median life expectancy for warthogs is 11.5 years.

Dickerson Park Zoo is open daily 10 a.m.-4 p.m., weather permitting. The zoo will be closed on Christmas Day, New Year's Day and when the walkways are covered with ice or snow. For more information, visit the zoo online at www.dickersonparkzoo.org, or call the zoo's information hotline, 417-864-1800.

For more information, contact: Melinda Arnold, Public Relations Director, 417-833-1570 (office) or 417-848-0162 (cell), marnold@dickersonparkzoo.org